



Edgar C. Polomé

Christie and Stanley E. Adams Jr.
Centennial Professorship, emeritus

PhD, Philology,
Free University of Brussels

CURRICULUM VITAE

Areas of Specialization

- Germanic and Indo-European linguistics, culture, and religion; Gothic and other Old Germanic dialects; Dutch linguistics; sociolinguistics (Germany, Low Countries)
- Germanic languages and cultures, especially ancient Germanic dialects and religion; Indo-European languages and cultures, especially Hittite and Anatolian languages; Indo-Iranian, Latin and Italic dialects; Celtic; Baltic, Greek
- Sociolinguistics, especially multilingualism in Africa and South Asia
- African linguistics, especially Bantu, comparative grammar, and Swahili structure

Education

- 1946-1949 Doctorat en philologie (= PhD), Université Libre de Bruxelles
- 1942-1943 Agrégation de l'enseignement moyen du degré supérieur, Université Catholique de Louvain
- 1942-1943 Licence en philologie germanique (=MA), Université Catholique de Louvain
- 1938-1941 Candidature en philologie germanique (=BA), Université Libre de Bruxelles
- 1932-1938 "Humanités gréco-latines" (with highest distinction)
Athénée Royale de Koekelberg (Brussels, Belgium)

Academic Career

- 1985-1997 Christie and Stanley E. Adams Jr. Centennial Professor, College of Liberal Arts, University of Texas at Austin
- Spring 1979 Acting Chairman, Department of Germanic Languages, UT Austin
- 1969-1976 Chairman, Dept. of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures, University of Texas at Austin
- 1962-1972 Director, Center for Asian Studies, University of Texas at Austin
- 1962- Professor, Dept. of Germanic Languages, University of Texas at Austin
- 1961-1962 Visiting Associate Professor, Dept. of Germanic Languages, UT Austin

- 1956-1960 Professor (General, Indo-European, and African Linguistics), Université Officielle du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Burundi
 1954-1956 Professor (Dutch), Radiodiffusion Nationale Belge [ondes françaises]
 1942-1956 Senior Instructor (Dutch, English, German), Athénée Adolphe Max (City of Brussels)

Honors

- Editorship of the *Journal of Indo-European Studies* (2 double issues a year)
 Co-Editorship of *The Mankind Quarterly*
- 1992 Germanic Linguistics Round Table, Berkeley, CA: invited featured speaker and travel grant
 Travel grant to Zürich, Switzerland (Indogermanische Gesellschaft/University of Zürich Department of Linguistics)
- 1991 International Linguistic Association: travel grant to New York
 First Prize of the Foundation "Kultur og Språk," University of Umeå, Sweden (+ travel grant to Umeå)
- 1990 Werner Reimers Foundation Travel Grant: Bad Homburg, Germany
 Indo-European Colloquium of Japan: travel grant to Osaka, Japan
 Institute for Descriptive and Comparative Linguistics, U. of Leiden (the Netherlands): Travel Grant to Leiden
 NEH Grant: \$250,000 to organize a 6-week postgraduate seminar on the present state of Indo-European Studies, U. of Texas at Austin
- 1988 IREX Travel Grant: Leningrad/Moscow, Linguistic Institute, Academy of Science of the USSR
 Werner-Reimers Foundation Travel Grant: Bad Homburg, Germany
- 1986 Government of India: Invitation to the 200th Anniversary of the Declaration of Sir William Jones, Calcutta, India
- 1984 Werner-Reimers Foundation Travel Grant: Bad Homburg, Germany
- 1982 ACLS Travel Grant: London, School of Oriental and African Studies
- 1972-78 Office of Education, Washington, DC/American Institute of Indian Studies: consultant for language programs in India
- 1973 Government of Kenya Consultant: Linguistics Department, University of Nairobi, Kenya
- 1972 Ford Foundation Consultant: Linguistics Department, University of Nairobi, Kenya
- 1969-1970 Visiting Research Professor at the University of Dar es Salaam:
 Ford Foundation Grant for the Survey of Language Use and Language Teaching in Tanzania (Team Director)
- 1968 Fulbright Professor at the University of Kiel, Germany
- 1967 Office of Education Grant: Lecture tour (India, Taiwan, and Japan)
- 1963 Ford Foundation Grant: Linguistics advisor to seminar on new mathematics in Entebbe, Uganda
- 1963 Office of Education Grant through the Center for Applied Linguistics: Study of Swahili in Congo, Ruanda-Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania
- 1939-1941 University Foundation Scholarship: Belgian Ministry of Education scholarship
- 1938 University Foundation Scholarship (2nd on Belgian National Qualifying Examination)

Books Published

- (Co-Editor, with J. Greppin) *Jaan Puhvel Festschrift, Vol. II: Religion and Mythology*. Monograph of The Journal of Indo-European Studies (McLean, VA)
- (Co-Editor with Werner Winter) *Reconstructing Languages and Cultures*. Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs, Vol. 58. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992
- Research Guide on Language Change*. Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs, Vol. 48. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990
- Essays on Germanic Religion* (= *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Monograph No. 6). Washington, DC: The Institute for the Study of Man, 1989
- (Co-Editor with Susan Nacev-Skomal) *Proto-Indo-European: The Archaeology of a Linguistic Problem -- Studies in Honor of Marija Gimbutas*. Washington, DC: The Institute for the Study of Man, 1987
- (Editor) *Essays in Memory of Karl Kerényi* (= *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Monograph No. 4). Washington, DC: The Institute for the Study of Man, 1984
- (Guest Editor) *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology* (devoted to I. N. Diakonov's papers "On the Original Home of the Speakers of Indo-European"). *A Journal of Translations* 23: 2
- (Editor) *The Indo-Europeans in the Fourth and Third Millennia*. Ann Arbor, MI: Karoma, 1982
- (Editor) *Rural and Urban Multilingualism* (= *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 34). The Hague: Mouton, 1982
- Language, Society, and Paleoculture: Essays by Edgar C. Polomé* Selected and introduced by Anwar S. Dil. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1982
- (Editor) *Homage to Georges Dumézil* (= *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Monograph No. 3). Washington, DC: The Institute for the Study of Man, 1982
- (Editor) *Man and the Ultimate: A Symposium*. Austin, TX: Southwest Branch of the American Oriental Society, 1980
- (Co-Editor, with P. C. Hill) *Language in Tanzania*. London: Oxford UP, for International African Institute, 1980
- (Editor) *Proceedings of the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies*. Austin, TX: SWCAS, 1978
- (Co-Editor, with M. A. Jazayery and Werner Winter) *Linguistic and Literary Studies in Honor of Archibald A. Hill*. 4 Vols. The Hague, Paris, New York: Mouton, Walter de Gruyter, 1978
- (Editor) *Proceedings of the 1976 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies*. Sherman, TX: Austin College Press, 1977
- (Co-Editor, with Alfred Collins) *Proceedings of the 1975 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies*. Austin, TX: SWCAS, 1976
- (Co-Editor, with Herman van Olphen and Andrée Sjoberg) *Proceedings of the Conference on Language Testing and Levels of Proficiency in South Asian Languages*. Austin, TX: SARC, 1976
- (Co-Editor, with Alfred Collins) *Proceedings of the 1974 Annual Meeting of the Southwest Conference on Asian Studies*. Austin, TX: SWCAS, 1975
- (Co-Editor with Sirarpi Ohannessian and Charles Ferguson) *Language Surveys in Developing Nations: Papers and Reports on Sociolinguistic Surveys*. Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975

(Editor) *Old Norse Literature and Mythology: A Symposium*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969
Swahili Language Handbook. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1967
Encyclopedie van de Germaanse filologie. Vol. 1: *Taalkundig gedeelte*. Elisabethville: Université Officielle du Congo, 1959
Cours de linguistique appliquée aux langues africaines. Vol. 1: *Phonétique*; Vol. 2: *Morphologie*. Elisabethville: Université Officielle du Congo, 1959 [orig. 1957]
(Translation into Dutch) *Afrikaanse Kunsten en Moderne Wereld*. By Albert Maurice. Brussels: Enseigne du Chat qui Pêche, 1951
*Linguistische Studien im verband met de Germaanse Anlautgroep *hw-*. 2 Vols. Doctoral Dissertation, Brussels (unpublished)
De Middelnederlandse Bewerking van Liber VIII "De Proprietatibus Rerum" van Bartholomaeus Anglicus. Vol. I: *Inleiding en Commentaar*, Vol. II: *Tekst*. M.A. Thesis, Brussels (unpublished)

- Over 200 articles
- Hundreds of notes and reviews

Courses Taught

Germanic:

Old High German, Old Saxon; Gothic; comparative Germanic grammar; Ancient Germanic culture; Germanic religion and mythology

Indo-European:

Hittite and Anatolian languages; Sanskrit, Pali; Comparative Indo-Iranian, Avestan; Comparative Greek grammar; Latin and Italic dialects; Indo-European Phonology, Indo-European Morphology; Indo-European culture and religion

Linguistics:

Descriptive Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Morphology, the Comparative Method, Languages of South Asia, Languages of Africa and Asia, Introduction to Sociolinguistics

Africa:

Comparative Bantu, introduction to Bantu languages; Swahili, loMongo, ciLuba

Comparative Religion: History of Religious Ideas, Cosmogonies; Myths, Rites and Symbols

In memoriam Edgar Charles Polomé

Professor Edgar C. Polomé, Christie and Stanley E. Adams, Jr. Centennial Professor Emeritus in Liberal Arts, distinguished linguist, Indo-Europeanist and professor of comparative religions and languages, died of an osteosarcoma at the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, on Saturday, March 11, 2000.

Prof. Polomé was born on July 31, 1920, in Molenbeek-Saint-Jean, a suburb of Brussels, Belgium, the only child of Marcel and Berthe Polomé. His early childhood was already a multilingual one. He grew up speaking standard and Walloon French with his parents and paternal grandmother, though his mother was a native of Ghent who also spoke (Flemish) Dutch. With the family's maid Prof. Polomé spoke the local Brabantine

dialect of Dutch. While his primary education was in Dutch, he enrolled in a French-medium secondary school (Athénée Royal de Koekelberg), adding Latin, Greek, German, and English to his knowledge of languages, and graduated at the top of his class. Although Prof. Polomé showed an early interest in science ("dabbling at home in all kinds of experiments that often scared my mother out of her wits"), he received a rigorous training in classical philology, as well as modern dialectology. His German teacher, a Ph.D. candidate in Germanic philology, trained his students in phonological data collection and transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

When he won a Belgium National Scholarship and entered the University of Brussels in 1938, Prof. Polomé was encouraged to study Classics, but instead chose Germanic Philology. In his own words:

These were, politically, very volatile years. We took our freshman exams at the time when there was a danger of war, but apparently I did all right since I passed with the highest distinction. As a result, my parents allowed me to go on a trip to Germany which almost turned into a disaster, because my parents were on vacation in France while I was on my way along the Rhine Valley towards southern Germany when the war between France, England and Germany broke out after Hitler's invasion of Poland. I managed to scramble home with the last train before the border was closed, and Belgium remained out of the war until May 1940.

After Belgium's entry into the war, Prof. Polomé was conscripted and sent to southern France, though he was able to avoid internment in a prisoner-of-war camp and returned to his studies in Brussels. After the German occupying authorities eventually closed the University in 1942, Prof. Polomé completed his master's degree (Candidature en philologie germanique) at the University of Louvain in 1943 (thesis title: *De Middelnederlandse Bewerking van Liber VIII "De Proprietatibus Rerum" van Bartholomaeus Anglicus*), working closely with Prof. Etienne Lamotte on Sanskrit and Indic studies and developing his lifelong interest in comparative religions and cultures.

At war's end in 1945, Prof. Polomé joined the U. S. Army as an interpreter in Eschwege in occupied Germany. Ever the autodidact, Prof. Polomé managed to arrange work trips to the nearby university town, Göttingen, where he purchased a number of books and took up the study of Celtic. On his return to Belgium, he enrolled in the Free University of Brussels and completed his Doctorat en philologie germanique with Highest Distinction in 1949, writing his dissertation on labiovelars in Indo-European and the laryngeal theory under the direction of Prof. Adolph van Loey (*Linguistische Studiën in verband met de Germaanse Anlautgroep *hw-*). Conducting his dissertation research brought Prof. Polomé into direct contact and correspondence with most of the great Indo-Europeanists of the time, including Pokorny, Dumézil, Benveniste, Kurylowicz, as well as W. P. Lehmann, now Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas at Austin.

Off and on from 1942 to 1956, Prof. Polomé taught Germanic languages at the Athénée Adolphe Max in Brussels and also taught Dutch on the radio from 1954 to 1956. At that time, he was invited to join the faculty of the Université Officielle du Congo Belge et du Ruanda-Burundi in Elizabethville (Lubumbashi/Katanga) in the Shaba region of the Belgian Congo to establish a Department of Linguistics. There he developed a curriculum comparable to those in European universities and built up a well-equipped, highly sophisticated phonetics laboratory—the finest of its kind in Africa—where he and his students were able to conduct state-of-the-art acoustic analysis of African languages. Indeed, Prof. Polomé will be remembered by many colleagues as much for his work in Bantu linguistics, as for Indo-European studies. He devoted considerable

attention to Swahili, especially the creolized variety spoken in Elizabethville, producing many publications in this area and building on his earlier interests in the relationship between language and culture to include language contact, language planning, and modern sociolinguistics.

After the end of colonial rule in the Belgian Congo in 1960, Prof. Polomé was invited by Prof. Lehmann to teach for one semester at The University of Texas at Austin as a visiting professor during the absence of Prof. Werner Winter. He was quickly hired as a tenured professor in the Department of Germanic Languages which, despite its name, was the academic home for linguists working on topics of general and non-Germanic interest. Prof. Polomé, along with Prof. Lehmann, was instrumental in the creation of the Department of Linguistics and the Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures (DOALL), the latter established in 1969 with Prof. Polomé as its first chair (serving until 1976). In 1966, Prof. Polomé became a United States citizen.

Prof. Polomé gave much to the University. Aside from his work in DOALL, he was one of the first directors of the Center for Asian Studies (1962-72) and taught courses in many departments, including Anthropology, Classics, Linguistics, Foreign Language Education, and Germanic Languages, dealing with historical linguistics, comparative linguistics, sociolinguistics, the history of religion, and comparative religions. In 1984 he was honored with a Centennial Professorship in Liberal Arts. Among his numerous other honors were Prof. Polomé's Fulbright professorship to Kiel, Germany, in 1968 and a Ford Foundation grant to survey languages in Tanzania in 1969-1970, which brought him back as a researcher and teacher of linguistics to East Africa. Based at the University of Dar es Salaam, he also helped develop the bachelor's and master's programs in linguistics at the University of Nairobi. Prof. Polomé was also chair of the Language Committee of the American Institute of India Studies from 1972 to 1978, organized in 1990 an international seminar "Perspectives on the Ancient Indo-European World" sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and was awarded the first Sociolinguistics Prize by the University of Umeå, Sweden, in October, 1991. Prof. Polomé became Professor Emeritus in 1997.

Though paralyzed on his left side by a stroke in 1993, Prof. Polomé remained a prolific author and editor. His textbook *Swahili Language Handbook* (1967) is still used in many universities. Other books he wrote or edited include:

- *Old Norse Literature and Mythology* (1969)
- *Language in Tanzania* (1980)
- *Language, Society and Paleoculture* (1982)
- *The Indo-Europeans in the Fourth and Third Millennia B.C.* (1982)
- *Essays on Germanic Religion* (1989)
- *Research Guide to Language Change* (1990)
- *Reconstructing Languages and Cultures* (1992)
- *Indo-European Religion after Dumézil* (1996)
- *Miscellanea Indo-Europea* (1999)

Over his career Prof. Polomé wrote hundreds of articles and reviews for festschrifts and scholarly journals, edited and wrote the book chronicle for the Journal of Indo-European Studies from 1973 until his death, co-edited The Mankind Quarterly, and had wide correspondence with colleagues and friends around the world.

Prof. Polomé was beloved by his students for his lively personality, generous intellectual character, greatly humorous charm and wit, his truly encyclopedic knowledge, deep commitment to his students, passion for his work, as well as for his

unfailing ability in lectures to accentuate the wrong syllable, a phonological regularity which became known as Polomé's Law. This "law" was originally formulated by Mrs. Garland Bills as 'Addon's Law after a graduate student named Judy Haddon whose surname was regularly pronounced by Prof. Polomé without the "h". In time, the more exact formulation of Polomé's Law came to be: stress the penultimate syllable of an English word, unless that would be correct; otherwise stress the antepenultimate. One of Prof. Polomé's former students, Joseph C. Salmons, now a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, recalls also that

there was another Polomé's Law: I was talking to him once about Nostratic and related matters and he said "If you give me one rule that says any segment X can go to any other segment Y in any environment Z, I can give you Proto-Human." We came to call that Polomé's Law, too.

Another of Prof. Polomé's former students, Bridget Drinka, currently on the faculty of the University of Texas at San Antonio, adds:

I felt that Edgar really enjoyed watching me attack a problem in my own way. He knew and appreciated how I thought, but was always ready to demand a little more, or a lot more. To the extent that I am a critical thinker and an inquisitive researcher today, I owe these attributes to Edgar's care, guidance, and meticulous attention to detail. No one did more to shape my mind and my ability to reason than Edgar did. I definitely rewrote every word of my dissertation at least once under his critical eye. He let me get away with absolutely nothing. He showed me the value of his own eclectic approach: read profusely, examine the validity of all sides of the issue, stake out a position, but keep your mind open to other interpretations. This might be what I would really call Polomé's Law: immerse yourself in the possibilities.

Though Prof. Polomé reached countless individuals through his participation in many international congresses, travels as a consultant to Kenya, Tanzania, India and elsewhere, affiliations with respected professional organizations and journals, not to mention his publications, perhaps his greatest legacy is his students, so many of whom continue his work as teachers and scholars. Despite the demands of a career filled with multiple research, teaching, and administrative duties, Prof. Polomé will be remembered by his students and colleagues for his generosity of time to read and discuss topics of mutual scholarly interest, his sharing of references, and offering supportive questioning when he did not agree.

Prof. Polomé has been honored by several festschrifts, to which many scholars throughout the world have contributed. The latest, a two-volume homage in honor of his 80th birthday, is due to appear later this year.

In the words of his wife, Sharon:

Edgar was dynamic, "a live coal straight from the furnace of creation," a kind, wonderful man and gregarious host. He loved to eat, loved to cook chicken curry and was known for his Indonesian specialties. He was the "Rail Baron" who ran LGB trains so many wonderful Sunday afternoons in the last year of his life, and who sang sweet and comic songs in his gravelly voice to his wife, who will miss him more than he ever could have dreamt.

Prof. Polomé is survived by his beloved wife, Sharon, and by his son André, daughter-in-law Susan, of Bozeman, MT, by André's son Chris and wife Debbie and their new baby girl—Prof. Polomé's first great-grandchild—Rénée Polomé, and by his daughter Monique and her husband, John Ellsworth, and their daughter Danielle, of Fairfax, VA. He is also

survived by ex-wife Barbara Harris. Prof. Polomé's first wife, Julia Schwindt, whom he married in 1944 and who was the mother of his children, died in 1975.

Of his long and productive life, Prof. Polomé once said:

Having taught and done research on four continents—Europe, Africa, America and Asia—I feel gratitude that my experience has enabled me to discover the richness of Man's intellectual and artistic heritage . . . It has especially allowed better appreciation of the perennial aesthetic, ethical and social values that make us all part of the great human brotherhood.

We are fortunate that Prof. Edgar Polomé cared enough to share so much of his knowledge and experience with us, almost until the last day of his life. We are all immeasurably blessed by having known him.

Larry R. Faulkner, President
The University of Texas at Austin
John R. Durbin, Secretary
The General Faculty

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Mark L. Loudon (chair), Carol F. Justus, and Robert D. King.

Autobiographical essays:

"Author's Postscript" in *Language, Society, and Paleoculture*, ed. by Anwar S. Dil, Stanford, 1982.

"From Philology to Language and Culture" in *First Person Singular II: Autobiographies by North American Scholars in the Language Sciences*, ed. by E. F. K. Koerner, Amsterdam, 1991, pp. 256-271.

Festschrifts:

Studies in Honor of Edgar C. Polomé, ed. by M. A. Jazayery and W. Winter, Berlin/New York, 1988.

Perspectives on Indo-European Language, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Edgar C. Polomé (*Journal of Indo-European Studies* monograph 7, 2 vols.), Washington, 1991.

Lists of Publications—Books, Articles, Reviews:

<<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/lrc/iedocctr/ie-pubs/ecp.html>>

Obituary from *The Austin American-Statesman*

Edgar Charles Polomé

1920-2000

Professor Emeritus

The University of Texas at Austin

Dr. Edgar Polomé, distinguished linguist and Indo-Europeanist and professor of comparative religious and languages, dies on an osteocarcoma in a hospital in Houston, Texas, on Saturday, 11 March 2000.

Born in Brussels, Belgium, Edgar was the only child of Marcel and Berthe Polomé. He won a Belgium National Scholarship and entered the university in 1938, but as one might expect, his university education met with complications because of World War II. By the time Edgar received his Doctorat en Philologie Germanique with Highest Distinction from the Université Libre de Bruxelles in 1949, he had served in the Belgium army, obtained his Candidature en philologie Germanique before the Germans closed the University in 1942, and obtained his License en Philologie from the Université Catholique de Louvain, where he spent one year immersed in Sanskrit and Indic Studies, which piqued his lifelong interest in comparative religion and cultures. After the liberation of Europe, he served as interpreter in the US Air Force in Eschwege, Germany, where he continued to pursue his studies by learning Celtic.

During and after the war, Edgar taught Germanic languages at the Athénée Adolphe Max, Ville de Bruxelles (1942-1956); taught Dutch on the radio from 1954-1956; and then moved to the Belgian Congo to establish a Department of Linguistics at the Université Officielle du Congo Belge, where he developed a curriculum comparable to those in European universities and built up a well-equipped, highly sophisticated phonetics laboratory -- the finest in Africa.

After the fall of the Belgian Congo in 1960, Edgar was invited to teach for one semester at UT as a guest lecturer. He was quickly hired as a tenured professor and became an American citizen in 1966, a proud day in his life.

Edgar gave much to the University. He was one of the first directors of the Center for Asian Studies (1962-2), founder and first chairman of the Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures (1969-1976), taught courses in many departments (e.g., Classics, Linguistics, FLEC, Germanic), and was honored in 1984 with a Centennial Professorship in Liberal Arts, following his Fulbright professorship to Kiel in 1968, Ford Foundation grant to survey languages in Tanzania in 1969-1970, chairmanship of the Language Committee of the American Institute of India Studies from 1972-1978, and membership in scholarly societies around the world. His 1990 international seminar "Perspectives on the Ancient Indo-European World" was sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. He was awarded the First Sociolinguistics Prize by the University of Umeå, Sweden, in October, 1991.

A stroke in 1993 paralyzed his left side but hardly slowed him down. Dr. Polomé was a prolific author with a rich bibliography. His textbook Swahili Language Handbook is still used in many universities; among other books he wrote or edited are: Language in Tanzania; Language, Society and Paleoculture: Essays on Germanic Religion: Old Norse Literature and Mythology; the Indo-Europeans in the Fourth and Third Millennia B.C.: Guide o Language Change; Reconstructing Languages and Cultures (1991); Indo-European Religion after Dumézil (1996) and Miscellanea Indo-Europea (1999).

In addition, he wrote hundreds of articles for festschrifts and scholarly journals, edited and wrote the book chronicle for The Journal of Indo-European Studies from 1973 until his death, co-edited The Mankind Quarterly, and had wide correspondence with colleagues and friends around the world.

Edgar was a happy soul. His students loved him for his lively personality, generous intellectual character, greatly humorous charm and wit, his truly encyclopedic knowledge, deep commitment to his students, passion for his work, as well as for his unfailing ability in lectures to accentuate the wrong syllable (Polomé's Law).

Perhaps his greatest legacy to mankind is his students, so many of whom continue his work as teachers and scholars.

His colleagues respected him for his hard work, tireless devotion to education and to his students, his impeccable scholarship and impressive contributions to so many fields in a career filled with teaching, administrative duties, his participation in many international congresses, travels as a consultant to Kenya, Tanzania, India and elsewhere, affiliation with respected professional organizations and journals, not to mention the papers and other publications that comprise his astonishing bibliography. He has been honored by several Festschriften, to which many scholars throughout the world have contributed. The latest, a two-volume homage to Edgar in honor of his 80th birthday, is due out later this year.

Edgar was dynamic, "a live coal straight from the furnace of creation," a kind, wonderful man and gregarious host. He loved to eat, loved to cook chicken curry and was known for his Indonesian specialties. He as the "Rail Baron" who ran LGB trains so many wonderful Sunday afternoons in the last year of his life, and who sang sweet and comic songs in his gravelly voice to his wife -- who will miss him more than he ever could have dreamt -- and who enchanted us all with his many captivating stories of a life that spanned most of the Twentieth Century: the Great Depression, German occupation in W.W.II, colonialism and revolution in the Congo, and so many adventures in his extensive travels.

Edgar is survived by his beloved wife, Sharon, and by his son André, daughter-in-law Susan, of Bozeman, MT, by André's son Chris and wife Debbie and their new baby girl -- Edgar's only great-grandchild so far - Rénée Polomé, and by his daughter Monique and her husband, John Ellsworth, and their daughter Danielle, of Fairfax, VA. He is also survived by ex-wife Barbara Harris. Edgar's first wife, Julia Schwindt, mother of his children, died in 1975.

Of his long and productive life, Edgar once said:

"Having taught and done research on four continents - Europe, Africa, America and Asia -- I feel gratitude that my experience has enable me to discover the richness of Man's intellectual and artistic heritage It has especially allowed better appreciation of the perennial aesthetic, ethical and social values that make us all part of the great human brotherhood."

We are fortunate that he cared enough to share so much of his knowledge and experience with us, almost until the last day of his beautiful life. We are all immeasurably blessed by having known him.

UT mourns Polomé:

Friends, faculty remember retired UT professor

-Remi Bello, *Daily Texan* Staff

Daily Texan, 03/21/2000, p. 5

With outspoken compassion and remorse, UT faculty and former students joined family members in mourning the death of Edgar Charles Polome, retired UT professor of comparative languages and religions. Polome, who was 79, died March 11 at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Described by his colleagues as "outstanding and special," Polome passed away several weeks after being diagnosed with acute osteosarcoma, a cancerous growth derived from bone or containing bone tissue.

Mark Loudon, associate professor of Germanic studies, said Polome was a gifted educator who dedicated himself enthusiastically to academic distinction, even after officially retiring from the University in 1998 for health reasons.

"He was a very kind and loving man -- there was never any bitterness about him," said Loudon, who was Polome's colleague for 12 years. "His breadth of knowledge was phenomenal. A major international scholar has indeed been lost."

Born and educated in Brussels, Belgium, Polome has taught in and conducted research on four continents, including Asia and Africa, during his 50-year academic career.

In the Belgian Congo, he established the Department of Linguistics at the Universite Officielle du Congo Belge in 1956, where he developed a curriculum comparable to those at European universities and built an ultra-modern phonetics laboratory -- the most advanced in Africa at the time.

After a four-year commitment in the Belgian Congo, Polome was invited to the University as a single-semester guest lecturer but was promptly hired as a tenured professor.

A 1984 recipient of the UT Centennial Professorship in Liberal Arts, Polome taught African languages, linguistics, Indo-European and Germanic studies.

"Edgar was a splendid, nice and uncomplicated person; he knew everything," said Sharon Polome, wife of the deceased professor. "I personally do not think he's dead. I didn't think it was possible to dim such a light."

Spanning 38 years, Polome's career at the University reflected his vast commitment to academia, which focused on comparative religions and cultures.

He was the founder of the UT Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures and was one of the first directors of the Center for Asian Studies. Polome, who also chaired the Language Committee of the American Institute of Indian Studies for six years, spoke multiple languages and was a prolific author of mainly academic texts, journals and essays.

Even after death, Polome's collection of numerous academic publications will perpetuate his legacy at the University, Loudon said.

Joseph Salmons, a former UT historical linguistics graduate student, said Polome was an extraordinarily intelligent and caring professor who served as a glowing model for his students.

"He was unbelievable; he knew more than anybody that I've ever met in terms of culture, languages and religions," said Salmons, who is now a professor of German and linguistics at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. "My career is completely his doing."

In addition to two grandchildren and a great-grandchild, Polome is survived by his wife, Sharon, his son, Andre, and his daughter, Monique Ellsworth.

A private memorial service, open to Polome's family and friends, will be held at his residence on July 29, two days before what would have been his 80th birthday.
